

Monthly Report for October, 1946

Success was realized at last in the twelve month effort to establish a good Employment Problems Committee with wide representation the greater Newark area. A clinic, sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches and the Essex County Council of Churches, in Newark November 9 and 10, 1944, resulted in authorization of a permanent committee to work on the findings of the Employment section of that clinic. Two persons blocked the organizational progress, and urged the Committee to request the Newark Council for Intergroup Action to undertake the Committee's proposed functions. The request was made to the Newark Council last spring, and tabled for its first fall meeting. Now the Council has formally authorized an Employment Problems Committee from its members, elected your Industrial Relations Secretary to membership on the Council, and appointed him Secretary of the Employment Problems Committee. There will be a central committee of about five to ten persons (all members of the Council); and a Committee of one hundred persons (Doctors, social workers, ministers, employment personnel) in the community who are apt to hear persons complaining of suffering employment discrimination. The Committee of one hundred will channel such information to the central committee of E.P.C. which in turn will aid the complainant to make a formal complaint to the Division Against Discrimination. The objectives of the E.P.C. are three:

- (1) To help aggrieved individuals make their complaints of discrimination to the Division Against Discrimination.
- (2) To help individuals and groups in determining the possibility of their being employed in places where there is a background of rumored discrimination causing members of certain groups not to apply for work.
- (3) To prepare and carry on an education program through the agencies of the Council, in order to secure public support for fair employment practices, and in order to encourage aggrieved individuals and groups to supply information and data concerning discrimination.

Six public addresses were made during the month, in Passaic, Englewood, Trenton and Newark. As a result of addressing the C.I.O. State Conference in Trenton, the C.I.O. State Council accepted your Secretary's plan whereby individual local shop stewards and grievance committeemen will receive instructions about acting on all complaints made to them from Negro as well as white workers; and appointing "deputies" if necessary, in order to assure all workers that legitimate grievance will be handled as effectively as possible. This plan is intended to remedy the bad problems coming to your Industrial Secretary (and the many more that do not) often showing no union action on grievance of some Negro workers.

In addition to the six public addresses, seven meetings were attended in your Secretary's community relations work. Considerable work was done in helping to arrange the Social Tensions meeting of the New Jersey Welfare Council State Conference (to be Nov. 27, 28, 29); and to personally secure two of the four speakers.

Five special interviews and conferences with key people in the community were had in pursuit of our Industrialists program. A conference with Mr. Chester Barnard, President of N. J. Bell Telephone Company, resulted in his interest in having his Vice-president in charge of Industrial Relations, arrange a legitimate reason for your Secretary to "float" through all Bell Telephone departments and facilities and report conditions and how to improve them. Your Secretary saw some success of our Industrialists' Program as he was told of the conferences your Secretary arranged through Mr. Thomas Roy Jones, President of American Type Founders, and Bell Telephone's hiring of its first Negro operators in Newark. Success was realized in getting (confidentially) a regular report from the Newark U.S.E.S. office, of the number of Negro and white persons referred to jobs (weekly) and the number of each group rejected. This provides us with a broad sample from which we can determine the degree to which Negroes are meeting discrimination. We find, to date, that exactly twice as many Negroes as whites are not hired, even after proper referral. This is one of the conditions the Employment Problems Committee is intended to alleviate. An extended conference with the Director of the Essex County Vocational Schools spurred that official to plan to drive home to Vocational Guidance Counselors in the County system, the necessity of guiding Negro youth according to their interests and talents, rather than on the basis of what the Counselor thinks is good for a Negro. Follow-up vigilance will be absolutely necessary on this matter.

Your Secretary has had three conferences on standards for household workers, with persons representing the workers themselves, and employers. A set of Standards are now being completed, and will be used to encourage the attractiveness of the field and the improvement of services to employers.

It is becoming impossible for your one Industrial Relations worker to carry on the full program of the department, and do an effective job of Placement also. We are not able to do a good job of Placement and carry on the more important educational and functional job in the community that we have grown into. This has been pointed out before, several times. Such problems as these were taken up at the National Urban League Regional Conference in New York City (Nov. 8, 9, 10 - '45) and it was recommended that a study be made of local office conditions so some policy might evolve, which in turn may help local programs. It seems necessary that the New Jersey Urban League thoroughly clarify its understanding of the various angles of the dilemma, and offer some constructive advice. We are not even interviewing all job seekers who come to this office; which, in turn, discourages others from coming. Not only does this decrease the effectiveness of our service, and limit our choices for strategic placements; it also decreases our up-to-date flow of information of conditions that applicants normally "give off steam" with. The Industrial Committee has suggested to the Executive Board, that an assistant be placed in the Industrial Department. We hope that official consideration of this will be given at the earliest possible time.

Referrals totaled 113 for the month. It is impossible to know how many actual placements occurred. However, the percentage of rejections from this office seems to be extremely small - perhaps 5%.